

Recipes from *A Persian Dinner*

What's Cooking in Stow?

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Coucou Bademjan (Eggplant Omlet/Frittata)

Peel and cube enough eggplant (about 1/2 lb) to measure 2 1/2 cups. In a large skillet saute 1 onion, sliced, in 3 T butter until it is browned. Transfer the onion with a slotted spoon to a dish and add 1 T more butter to the pan. Add the eggplant and toss it for 1 min. to coat it with the butter. Add 1 cup beef broth and 1 t. turmeric and bring the liquid to a boil. Simmer the eggplant, covered, over moderate heat for 10 min, or until it is very tender. Add the onion, increase the heat to high, and boil the mixture for 5 min, or until most of the liquid has evaporated. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and let it cool to room temp.

Whisk in 4 eggs, one at a time, and season the mixture with salt and pepper. Heat a 10-inch skillet over moderate heat and in it melt 3 T butter, tilting and rotating the pan to coat it with the butter. Pour in the egg mixture and cook it, covered, over low heat for 5 min, or until it is set around the edges. Loosen the omelet from the pan with a spatula and cook it, covered, for 3 min. more, or until the underside is browned. Put a 10-inch plate over the pan and invert the omelet onto the plate. Slide it back into the pan and brown the other side. Serve the omelet warm or at room temperature cut into wedges. Serves 6 as a first course.

Khoresh-e-Fesenjan (Chicken in Pomegranate and Walnut Sauce)

In a large skillet saute 2 onions, minced, in 3 T butter for 10 min, or until they are golden. Add 2 cups beef broth and bring to a boil over moderately low heat. Add 4 chicken breasts, skinned, boned and halved, and poach them, covered, for 10-12 min, or until they are just cooked through. Transfer the breasts with a slotted spoon to a board, reserving the poaching liquid in the skillet, cut each one lengthwise into 5 strips, and reserve the strips, covered with plastic wrap.

In a saucepan, combine 2-1/2 cups finely ground walnuts with 1-1/3 cups pomegranate juice (or pomegranate molasses, available at specialty food shops) and 1/4 cup sugar; bring the liquid to a boil, and simmer the mixture over moderately low heat for 15 min. Add the walnut mixture to the reserved poaching liquid with 2 T lemon juice and 1/4 t each of cinnamon, nutmeg, and pepper. Bring the liquid to a boil, and simmer the mixture for 25-30 min, or until the sauce is thick and dark. Add more sugar or lemon juice to taste, season the sauce with salt, and add the reserved chicken. Simmer the mixture for 5 min. more, or until the chicken is heated through, and serve the Khoresh with chelo (steamed rice).

Nan-e Barbari (Persian Quilted Bread)

In a small bowl proof 1 envelope of active dry yeast in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lukewarm water with a pinch of sugar for 10 minutes. In a large bowl combine 1 cup lukewarm water, 2 Tablespoons oil, and the yeast mixture. Stir in 4 cups flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, turn the dough out on a lightly floured surface, and knead it, adding more flour if the dough is sticky, for 5 minutes, or until it is smooth and elastic.

Form the dough into a ball, transfer it to a buttered bowl, and let it rise, covered with a tea towel, in a warm place for 2 hours, or until it is double in bulk. Punch down the dough and halve it. Lightly butter 2 baking sheets and on each sheet pat half the dough into an oval about 12 inches long and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Using your finger make 3 or 4 parallel ridges lengthwise about 1 inch apart in the dough. Brush the ovals with 2 Tablespoons sesame seed, and let the dough rest, covered, for 30 minutes. Bake the bread on the lowest rack of a preheated moderate oven (350 degree F.) for 5 minutes. Put the bread under a preheated broiler for 1 minute, or until the crust is golden. Serve the bread hot. Makes 2 nan-e barbari.

Persian Love Cake

Candied Rose Petals

You will need to prepare these the night before you make the cake. Make sure that you buy organically grown roses. The cake does not need these as there is rosewater in the icing, nor does it need the addition of pistachios, but it makes it much more special.

- * 2 large egg whites
- * 1/2 cup sugar (you do not need superfine sugar for this)
- * Petals from 2 organic roses

Whisk egg whites in small bowl until foamy. Using pastry brush, brush rose petals on both sides with egg whites; sprinkle on both sides with sugar. Dry on nonstick rack at least 6 hours or overnight.

Cake

Preheat oven to 325°F. Butter two 8-inch-diameter cake pans with 1 1/2-inch-high sides. Line pan bottoms with parchment paper; butter parchment

- * 1 cup cake flour
- * 14 tablespoons baker's sugar or superfine sugar, divided
- * 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- * 1/4 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- * 3 large eggs, separated
- * 6 tablespoons water
- * 1/4 cup canola oil
- * 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- * 1/4 teaspoon whole cardamom seeds (removed from about 5 green cardamom pods). ***Grind the seeds or use a mortar and pestle. I'd definitely suggest you use the seeds from the pods. They're much more pungent than jarred ground cardamom.***

Sift flour, 7 tablespoons baker's sugar, baking powder, and salt into large bowl. Whisk yolks, water, canola oil and grated lemon peel and cardamom in small bowl until smooth. Add yolk mixture to dry ingredients; whisk until smooth. Beat egg whites in medium bowl until soft peaks form. Gradually add 7 tablespoons baker's sugar; beat until whites resemble thick marshmallow fluff. Fold whites into batter in 3 additions. Divide batter between prepared pans. Bake until cakes are golden and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 25 minutes.

Cool in pans on racks 15 minutes. Turn out onto racks, peel off parchment, and cool completely. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Wrap and store at room temperature.)

Frosting

This icing recipe makes a lot so you can be generous with it.

* 2 1/2 cups chilled heavy whipping cream, divided

* Pinch of saffron threads - ***I have read online some people say they made the icing without the saffron. It's a very important flavor component. If you don't have saffron, don't make it.***

* 2/3 cup powdered sugar

* 1 teaspoon rose water

Combine 1/2 cup cream and saffron in small saucepan. Bring to simmer. Remove from heat; let steep 20 minutes. Chill until cold.

Beat remaining 2 cups cream, powdered sugar, and rose water in large bowl until soft peaks form; strain in saffron cream. ***Straining the saffron removes any lumps that occurred while simmering the cream and the saffron threads. I recommend you strain it but you don't have to. Either way the flavor/outcome is the same.***

Beat until peaks form.

Decorate the iced cake with rose petals and pistachios.

* 2 tablespoons natural unsalted pistachios ***-slightly chopped***

Natural unsalted pistachios can be difficult to find. Whatever you do DO NOT USE roasted salted pistachios. You may find natural unsalted pistachios in stores like Whole Foods or a local ethnic market. If you are lucky you may be able to find Persian Slivered Pistachios. They can be ordered online.

Let the cake chill for one hour. It's best eaten same day, or next day to retain it's best flavor and freshness.